

DAIRY NEWS

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Legislation

The 2000 Washington legislature passed the department request bill updating and clarifying the Custom Meat Law, chapter 16-49 RCW. This law covers custom farm slaughter, custom slaughter plants and custom meat facilities. The requirement for the department to hold hearings on whether or not new custom slaughter plants are needed was removed. This hearing requirement went back to the days before mandatory federal meat inspection, but it no longer served a useful purpose. The section providing for prosecutions for violations was repealed and a section was added addressing wholesaling of inspected meat by custom meat facilities.

A bill legalizing the sale of colostrum milk was also passed into law by the legislature at the request of industry. It will allow licensed milk producers to sell colostrum milk to licensed milk plants or food processors for processing into a food supplement. The colostrum must be handled in a sanitary manner and must be kept separated from the milk as before. Open containers of colostrum in the milk house, etc. will still be violations of the PMO requirements.

Foot-and-Mouth Disease Alert

The state veterinarian's office has issued the following alert:

Foot-and-mouth disease, one of the most dreaded livestock illnesses, has been confirmed in South Korea and Japan. A new outbreak is occurring on a Northern Island of Japan while the original cases were on a Southern Island of Japan. Reports are also coming in that the disease is raging in Mongolia and some former Soviet States in Asia.

Humans are not susceptible, but may carry the disease to susceptible animals. Livestock producers should take precautions to protect their livestock from this disease by preventing farm visits from persons that have been in South Korea, Japan, Mongolia or former Soviet States of Asia within the last 30 days.

USDA is prohibiting importation of susceptible animals and animal products from the countries affected. Susceptible animals include cattle, swine, goats, sheep, deer and other cloven hoofed animals. Symptoms include fever blister like sores on the tongue and lips, in the mouth, on the teats and between the hooves.

For more information contact your local veterinarian or the Washington State Veterinarian's office at (360) 902-1878.

WSDA Food Safety Compliance Update

January 2000 was the official start date of the Food Safety Program's change with compliance enforcement actions on Grade "A" dairy licensees. Dairy farm and plant inspections are still based on the 1995 Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO) and State laws, such as chapter 15.36 RCW, Milk and Milk Products. The major change is that the inspection reports now indicate "significant" or "critical" violations. In addition to posting copies of inspection reports at dairy operations, Notice of Correction (NOC) letters are mailed to the licensee due to non-compliant inspections. A non-compliant inspection consists of any inspection where "critical" violations are noted or where the "significant" violation point score falls below 90. Continued non-compliance with WSDA's dairy law will still cause the Food

Safety Program to send Notice of Intent (NOI) letters for degrade or license revocations.

NOC letters are also being sent out for dairy products in violation of the state's standards for bacteria, coliform and leukocytes. Again, continued non-compliance will result in the program issuing NOI enforcement action.

Between January and April 2000, a total of 122 NOC letters were sent to dairy farms and dairy plant operations. Of the farms, 65 farms were noted with "critical" violations while 48 farms had "significant" scores below 90. For the plants, five dairy plants were noted with "critical" violations and four plants had "significant" violation scores below 90.

Food Safety Program Adopts Policy and Procedure on Bulk Tank Installations

The Food Safety Program has adopted a policy and procedure on bulk tank and equipment system installation. The policy interprets sections of chapter 16-125 WAC, Farm Milk Storage Tanks and Bulk Milk Tanker-Requirements, and requires that plans or drawings of bulk tank installations be submitted to the department for review and approval prior to installation.

The procedure outlines the process by which these plans and drawings are submitted to the department and the steps for approving the plans and bulk tank installations. Copies of the policy and procedure will be mailed to all producers and installers as part of an information packet in the near future. The policy and procedure also covers equipment systems installations. The submission of plans for review and approval by the department prior to installation of equipment systems is required by the Pasteurized Milk Ordinance. The requirement that plans be submitted to the department for approval has been in effect since the mid-1980s.

The procedure outlines that once you submit the application form for your proposed installation, a Food Safety Program representative will contact you regarding the installation proposal to let you know if the plan is approved or to get further information. Upon approval of your plan, you can commence installation and sometime near or at the completion of the installation, a Food Safety representative will visit your facility to determine if the equipment was correctly installed.

Please do not hesitate to call your local Food Safety Officer or the Food Safety Program for technical assistance prior to or at any time during the planning and installation of the bulk tank or equipment systems.

Dairy Plant Standardization Activities

The WSDA Food Safety Program conducted dairy plant standardization activities during the month of May. Two standardization sessions were held for Food Safety staff who conduct dairy plant inspections. Staff in Eastern Washington held a practice session at the Wilcox plant in Cheney, WA and the Western Washington staff held their session at the Vitamilk plant in Seattle, WA. Both sessions covered topics of regulatory compliance, survey and check-rating issues and upcoming changes to the appendix N program.

Dairy Options Pilot Program Training Sessions

To help dairy producers respond to volatile dairy prices, the USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is administering the Dairy Options Pilot Program (DOPP), an innovative cost-share program in selected states and counties. Round II of the DOPP is underway and the training sessions for eligible dairy producers in Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom Counties have been scheduled.

DOPP is a pilot program authorized under the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act of 1996. It is designed to give producers an opportunity to learn how futures and options markets work and, at the same time, give producers first-hand experience in buying put options contracts to insure a minimum price for their milk. A put option is a contract traded on eligible markets that gives the buyer the right but not the obligation to sell the underlying futures contract at a price known as the strike price on or before the established expiration date.

DOPP Training Sessions in Washington State:

Snohomish County June 26, 2000
Best Western Barron Inn, 19233 State Highway 2,
Monroe, WA

Skagit County June 27, 2000
Royal Fork Buffet, 2300 Freeway Drive,
Mount Vernon, WA

Whatcom County June 28, 2000
Bernice Vossbeck Elementary School, 1301 Bridgeview Drive,
Lynden, WA

Eligible dairy producers will receive an invitation to the DOPP training sessions from the USDA Risk Management Agency and they should return the self-addressed postcard to reserve a space at the training session by Friday, June 16, 2000.

As space permits, dairy producers who are not eligible to participate in this DOPP cost-share project, may still attend one of the training sessions to learn about put options for managing price risk.

For more information contact Dave Green, Senior Risk Management Specialist, USDA-RMA, Spokane Regional Office at 509-353-2147 or visit the USDA-RMA website at:

<http://www.rma.usda.gov/training/programs/dopp/index/html>

DAIRY NEWS -- This newsletter is published by the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Program to foster a better understanding and harmony between the Department and its dairy farmer constituents by informing them of current issues and policy and, to solicit their input and constructive criticisms. For more information contact Mike Donovan, Food Safety Program Manager, at (360) 902-1883 or at PO Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560. Inquiries regarding availability of this publication in alternative formats should be directed to the WSDA Food Safety Program at (360) 902-1875 or TDD at (360) 902-1996.